United Nations S/PV.7368

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7368th meeting
Monday, 26 January 2015, 1 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 1.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: Throughout the conflict in Ukraine, and repeatedly in recent weeks, the Secretary-General has called for de-escalation, restraint and the protection of civilians. We deeply regret that these calls appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

In just five days since we last met on 21 January (see S/PV.7365), close to 50 civilians have been killed and nearly 150 have been seriously wounded. On 22 January, over a dozen civilians died when rockets hit their trolleybus in Donetsk city. The same day, at least 10 civilians were killed amid heavy fighting in the city of Horlivka. On Saturday, 24 January, a barrage of attacks with multiple rocket launcher systems hit the city of Mariupol, destroying buildings and impacting a market filled with civilians. Dozens of people lost their lives, including women and children, and over 100 were wounded. The Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe reported, based on crater analysis, that the rockets originated from territory controlled by the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic".

Mariupol lies outside of the immediate conflict zone. The conclusion can thus be drawn that the entity that fired these rockets knowingly targeted a civilian population. This would constitute a violation of international humanitarian law. We must send an unequivocal message — the perpetrators must be held accountable and brought to justice.

On 23 January, the leader of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic announced a boycott of future consultations with the trilateral contact group, a unilateral withdrawal from the ceasefire and threatened to seize further territory, with a plan that includes pushing the front line all the way to the borders of Donetsk oblast. As the Secretary-General stated on 24 January (SG/SM/16485), this constitutes a violation of their commitments under the Minsk accords. We call directly on the rebels to immediately cease their provocative and violent actions, to abide by international law and to make good on their commitments. We also urge the leadership of the Russian Federation to use its influence to call on the rebels to cease hostilities immediately. This will be a critical step in stopping the bloodshed.

The Ukrainian leadership has been vocal about its commitment to the Minsk accords and has asserted that it remains in a defensive position. However, we note the recent emergency measures adopted by the National Security and Defence Council, particularly those in relation to "strengthening counter-terrorism measures", and appeal for the application of maximum restraint. In light of the just-declared state of emergency in Donbas, it has never been more important to guarantee humanitarian workers and goods full and unhindered access. Bureaucratic hurdles on both sides of the conflict line are impeding humanitarian access and must be eased. We also call on the Government of Ukraine to ensure that humanitarian operations are free from taxation.

We recognize the difficulty of diplomatic discussions aimed at finding a peaceful resolution to this conflict, given entrenched positions. Nonetheless, efforts to find a political solution must urgently be redoubled. President Poroshenko's announcement that an agreement has been reached on the necessity of holding negotiations in the Geneva format, with the participation of the European Union, the United States, Ukraine and Russia, is welcome.

Before I close, let me share our assessment of the way forward, with an emphasis on reviving the Minsk accords. As agreed at Minsk, all sides must immediately cease hostilities, with the onus particularly on the rebels to recommit to the ceasefire and back down from their offensive. We sincerely hope that the trilateral contact

group will reconvene in consultations with rebel leadership, as envisaged this week, to work towards a sustainable ceasefire and the implementation of the broader Minsk accords. Most importantly, all sides must commit to the protection of civilians and letting assistance reach those in need.

Finally, there must be full political recommitment to a peaceful and lasting solution to this conflict at the highest levels. I reiterate our encouragement of a convening of the Geneva format at the earliest opportunity. The United Nations also remains ready to support the consolidation of a sustainable and lasting peace process, as may be required. Over 5,000 lives have already been lost in this conflict. We must find a way to stop it, and we must do so now.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this urgent meeting on the situation in Ukraine. Let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing and insights into the current situation.

Lithuania condemns in the strongest terms the attacks on Mariupol and extends its sincere condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives or have been injured during these attacks.

The bloodiest conflict in Europe since the Balkan wars is taking place as we speak. Last Wednesday in this Chamber (see S/PV.7365), the Security Council members once again expressed concern at the situation and urged all parties to the conflict, including Russia, to return to the Minsk agreements and ensure their prompt and full implementation in order to prevent even more destruction and bloodshed. Alas, what we saw over the weekend was more deadly shelling, more destruction, and more human tragedy caused by the Kremlin's unbridled mercenaries, including the deadly attack on Mariupol, which this Council failed to condemn because Russia put protecting the militants above condemning the perpetrators.

After 29 open briefings and no progress on the ground, it is hard not to sound repetitive here. However, we cannot let Ukraine fall through the cracks of international attention. More than 5,000 dead, some 11,000 injured and about 1.5 million displaced — such is the cost of Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine. Almost 50,000 people have fled their homes since 14 January; at least 262 people were killed between 13 and 21 January alone. Last week again, from 75 to 115 shelling attacks on Ukrainian positions took place every day. The Donetsk airport, which the Kremlin-sponsored militants captured last week, has been pounded to rubble by months of attacks, causing destruction seen only in the worst of wars. Some 550 square kilometres of land have been captured by the illegal militants since the beginning of the ceasefire. Such are the realities of what we continue to call a ceasefire.

Just like the breaches of the 1991 Alma Ata Declaration, the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, the 1997 Black Sea Fleet Agreement Between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and various other documents, including the more recent the Geneva statement and the Berlin joint declaration, the Minsk agreements are just another casualty of Russia's aggression against neighbouring Ukraine.

One does not seek peace by arming illegal fighters in a neighbouring country with advanced artillery systems, multiple rocket launchers, truckloads of arms and ammunition, and tanks. One does not seek peace by sending one's own troops and commandos to fight on the soil of one's neighbour. One does not seek peace by issuing continuous threats and intimidations vis-à-vis one's neighbour, or by annexing parts of the neighbour's territory. One does not seek peace by unleashing a continuous barrage of hate-mongering propaganda and lies aimed at dehumanizing and demonizing one's neighbour. As long as Russia persists on this course, let us be frank, peace in Ukraine has no chance.

Last Saturday, Ukraine suffered the second deadliest single incident on its soil since the downing of flight MH-17 in July 2014. Some 30 people were killed and about 90 wounded during the shelling of the city of Mariupol. The Under-Secretary-General spoke of the militants withdrawing unilaterally from the ceasefire. In the days preceding the attack, Alexander Zakharchenko, the self-proclaimed boss of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic, repeatedly stated his disdain for the ceasefire. "There is no ceasefire. We will fight. I promise," he said.

> "There will be no more ceasefires or rotations ... There will be no attempts to talk about ceasefire from our side. Kyiv does not understand that we are now able to attack on three fronts at once."

And then hours before the tragedy, he said: "Today the offensive against Mariupol begins. In a few days we will swallow the Debaltsevo kettle". Notably, a day before the deadly attacks, Russia's Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) anticipated Mariupol's "liberation" in an interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour.

And yet, in spite of the obvious, Russia continues to blame Ukraine for ceasefire violations, including the Mariupol attack. Anti-Ukrainian rhetoric is not abating. Last week in this Chamber, we heard the long-debunked myths of "the junta", "the coup", "fascist Ukraine", and "oppression of Russian speakers" being once again resuscitated and put into use. For a year now, aggressive anti-Ukrainian propaganda has been used to brainwash, confuse, distract and obfuscate.

The international community should not and must not give in to these obfuscations. Therefore, let me ask again: How can a bunch of illegal militants expand their offensive, continue capturing territory and threaten to carry out attacks on three fronts against the State of Ukraine? How can a bunch of illegal militants without external trade ties, income or budget amass hundreds of armored combat vehicles, artillery systems and rocket launchers — all those Tochka-U tactical missile launch systems, Grad rockets, Uragan and Buratino rocket launchers? How can they afford modern tanks, each of which costs at least $4 million? How can they claim their own air fleet? How can hundreds of Russian soldiers be dying on Ukraine's soil if they are not even there?

How come hundreds of Russian mothers receive the dead bodies of their sons in Cargo 200 boxes from a conflict to which Russia claims it is not a party? How come, in spite of the devastating lawlessness and countless crimes committed by the separatist militants and registered in the reports of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Russia has not even once, not even mildly, condemned the perpetrators? All of this, as well as Russia's persistent protectiveness of the illegal militants, speak to Russia's direct involvement in and support for the war in Ukraine.

That involvement has been confirmed by certain militant leaders. Back in August last year, the same Alexander Zakharchenko said that thousands of Russian citizens, including many professional soldiers, were fighting alongside the separatists. And then he suddenly withdrew his statement, just as he retracted his boasting about the attack on Mariupol on Saturday. Another notorious character, the Russian commando Igor Girkin — who is also known as Strelkov and who played a big role in stoking war in eastern Ukraine — recently boasted to the press about having started the war by crossing the border with his squad, saying that if it had not been for them, there would have been no separatism in eastern Ukraine. A few days ago, he also said the Crimea referendum was carried out at gunpoint — something many of us have been repeating since the bogus plebiscite was held.

Life in eastern Ukraine may have been far from perfect due, to long years of neglect by successive Governments, yet the local inhabitants, many of them Russian speakers, had homes to return to after work, had their daily lives and had their daily bread. Thanks to the Kremlin's decision to "protect" Russian speakers, they now have no homes, no jobs and no income and may have lost dear ones or may be dead themselves. Russia's war, Russia's proxies and the abysmal lawlessness they imposed have brought destruction, displacement and death to the region.

In spite of all the ceasefire violations and military attacks, the Ukrainian leadership firmly maintains that the Minsk agreements are the only way forward towards peace. However, the Minsk agreements must be implemented by all the parties to the conflict — Russia included — in full and without arbitrary revisions or manipulation. The onus is on Russia to put an end to this senseless war by ending support to illegal armed groups, accepting international monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian border, withdrawing its troops and weaponry from eastern Ukraine, ensuring the release by the illegal militants of all illegally detained persons, including Nadiya Savchenko — who is being held illegally on Russian territory — ending the manipulation of humanitarian assistance and reaffirming its respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. International observers, including the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitoring missions, must be provided full and unconditional access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including Crimea. Their reporting is indispensable to get the facts straight.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is seriously concerned about the escalation of the situation in Ukraine. Cities in south-east Ukraine have been subjected to indiscriminate shelling by heavy weaponry for countless days, resulting in hundreds of civilian casualties. We resolutely condemn such actions against the civilian population. Of course, we sympathize with all those who have suffered, regardless of which city or village the tragedy occurred.

Since the beginning of January, the armed forces of Ukraine have fired virtually non-stop on the largest city in Dombas — Donetsk. Just over the past week, at least 27 civilians have died and 71 people have been injured, and 105 residences and 3 hospitals, as well as 2 kindergartens and 3 schools, have also been destroyed. Overall, 2,367 residential buildings have been destroyed. There has also been intensive shelling against Horlivka — something that the Western media seem not to refer to. That is also something not raised here in the Chamber by either our Western colleagues or by the representatives of the Kyiv authorities. The last week was the most difficult for Horlivka since last summer: 107 people died, including 9 children. Three hundred and seventeen people have been injured. Hospitals, 15 schools and dozens of preschools have been damaged. On 21 January approximately 10 civilians died as a result of the shelling of the city of Stakhanov, Luhansk oblast, using Uragan multiple rocket launcher systems. On 21 January approximately 10 civilians died.

That is far from a comprehensive list of all the cities under the control of self-defence formations in which civilians are dying every day. Yet the news cycles over the past few days have focused on two incidents alone: the shelling of a bus in Volnovakha and that of a residential neighbourhood in Mariupol. It is quite clear why: both cities are controlled by Kyiv's forces. A similar tragedy in Donetsk in which a bus stop was shelled did not lead to mourning in Kyiv or to the convening of emergency meetings of the Security Council. It was not even worthy of a statement by the Secretary-General. Is it that in the areas and cities controlled by the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics we have second class citizens?

It is impossible not to look at the fact that Kyiv has used the tragedies of recent days to fan the flames of hysteria. Accusations against self-defence formations are voiced immediately after events occur — almost as if they have been prepared in advance. Calls immediately emanate from Kyiv to Western capitals for financial and military assistance and for exerting pressure on the Russian Federation. However, as soon as the propaganda value ends, interest falls away very quickly in using the situation further and continuing investigation — all the more so given that, once some time has passed, one finds that the facts sometimes fall quite short of what was said initially. That is why we call for objective investigation of the January tragedies in Volnovakha, Donetsk and Mariupol, as well as earlier tragedies, including in the Maidan, Odesa and Mariupol.

On Saturday, the members of the Security Council were not able to agree on a statement to the press with regard to the tragedy in Mariupol. The need to issue a statement was as evident to us as it was in the cases of Volnovakha and Donetsk, and we were ready to back a similar text. Why has it not been possible this time? The answer is simple: the delegations of the United States, the United Kingdom and Lithuania insisted on including in the text condemnation of one statement by the leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, taken out of context of recent events and the entire crisis in Ukraine. That is something that has been pushed here at this meeting as well. But what is the full picture of what has taken place?

First, the leaders of the self-defence formations made different statements the day before yesterday. One cannot cite them selectively or take them out of context. Secondly, we have never heard anything from our Western colleagues in condemnation of the leaders of Ukraine, who have no shame when it comes to their statements and actions. There are threats that Dombas is going to be punched in the mouth, that it will be taken back by force and that it will be Ukrainized — and that the population has to prepare for "a major continental war", to which there is allegedly no alternative. Almost a week ago, no one other than Ukrainian President Poroshenko publicly declared the resumption of military activities. That took place just a few days after the meeting in Berlin of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Russia, Ukraine and France, at which they backed the idea of a speedy beginning to the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the line of contact as set out in the Minsk memorandum of 19 September 2014.

We should also remind our colleagues that Russian Security Council draft documents on very important

issues — putting an end to the blood-letting, the humanitarian situation in Dombas — were repeatedly unsuccessful. Take, for instance, a press statement in support of the Minsk agreements blocked by Lithuania and the United States of America, which was immediately submitted after they were made public, on 22 September. Following the shelling of a public transport stop in Donetsk, which was clearly carried out by Ukrainian forces, for a day we had to swat away unconstructive amendments by a number of delegations. It was by exerting pressure that we were able to agree to a text at the end of the day. In the case of Volnovakha, we agreed with the text that was proposed by the sponsors within one minute.

What is unfortunate is that throughout this entire conflict our Western colleagues have spent all their time accusing the self-defence formations of inhuman crimes, while they fully justify the actions of the Kyiv authorities. We have seen no constructive attempts to discuss the real reasons for the Ukrainian internal conflict and try to find a way out of the current situation. The escalation of the situation in Dombas was the result of the Kyiv authorities consistently rejecting direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk on the issue of the practical implementation of the Minsk agreements. During all of last September, we noticed the steps taken by the Kyiv forces to strengthen their military positions in the south-east. They deployed forces, equipment and heavy weaponry along the line of contact, as well as calling for new mobilizations and putting in new factory orders for defence equipment.

Measures for the economic reconstruction of Dombas were replaced by attempts to suppress the regions beyond their control. First they stopped paying pensions and social benefits, and then imposed a blockade on humanitarian assistance. All the while, Kyiv was preparing for war — something they did not hide in any way. History knows no "if". But everything could have been quite different if the Minsk ceasefire memorandum had been implemented in a timely manner, including the handing over of heavy weaponry and handing over the Donetsk airport to the self-defence formations. We would have avoided a new cycle of confrontation had the Ukrainian authorities accepted the 15 January proposal of Russian President Vladimir Putin on the immediate withdrawal of heavy weaponry. It is quite clear that peace in Dombas is something that is undesirable to the "war party" in Kyiv.

The Kyiv authorities have been sabotaging the holding of a regular meeting of the contact group in Minsk, unjustifiably conditioning it on high-level representation by the self-defence formations. The main thing now is to hold this meeting and not to quibble over the level of the participants. We are trying, as far as possible, to identify contacts for the meeting over the next few days. We will continue to prompt the parties towards direct dialogue, as we have done during the whole course of the internal Ukrainian crisis.

In that respect, we urge the representatives of States that possess some form of influence with Ukraine's leadership, especially Washington, D.C., to stop egging on the Ukrainian hawks, covering and justifying their inhumane actions, and pushing them towards a military solution to the conflict. That will only lead to an even greater catastrophe and create another hotbed of tension in Europe.

All responsible members of the international community must strive to attain from Kyiv not words but actions in the interest of launching a full-fledged political settlement process. Until the Kyiv party of war understands that force alone cannot resolve the conflict, and that multiple-launch rocket systems, tactical ballistic missiles, phosphorous and cluster munitions, and renewed mobilizations will not help it, such incidents will occur over and over again. The Kyiv authorities must be forced to sit down at negotiation table with the self-defence formations.

It is important that everyone understand that real results can be achieved only through direct dialogue between Kyiv and Donetsk and Luhansk, which the Ukrainian authorities have shirked thus far, having chosen a course of suppressing south-eastern Ukraine by military means. Without inclusive, direct political dialogue, which should allow us to properly negotiate the parameters for constitutional reform as required by the Geneva communiqué and the Minsk agreements, the national reconciliation of Ukraine and a sustainable settlement in the south-east will not occur.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing this afternoon.

This weekend, we saw the biggest single loss of civilian life in the Ukrainian crisis since the commitments made at Minsk on 5 September last year. Thirty civilians were killed and over 100 wounded following what the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) termed "an extremely

heavy barrage" of rockets fired indiscriminately into the crowded streets of Mariupol.

Only three days earlier, the Council had met to raise our serious concerns at the escalation in fighting along the agreed ceasefire line (see S/PV.7365). All of us called for de-escalation and a resumption of dialogue. That attack, many kilometres over the agreed ceasefire line, has taken the scope and threat of the conflict to a substantially new level. The attack was just not another refusal of the separatist leadership to abide by the commitments made at Minsk; it was a provocative and reckless escalation that, as the Secretary-General has made clear, could constitute a violation of international humanitarian law. Those responsible for the attack must be held accountable for their actions. It is deeply regrettable that the Council failed to agree on a press statement that would have condemned the announcement of a separatist offensive against Mariupol and the subsequent attack on Mariupol.

No one in the Council can deny the fact that the attack on Mariupol, like last week's on a bus near Volnovakha, came from the Russian-backed separatists. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission analysis of both attacks indicates clearly that in both incidents the rockets were fired from separatist-held territory. The attack would not have been possible without the military support of Russia and its supply of multiple-launch Grad and Uragan rocket systems to the separatists. In the past few weeks, Russia has transferred to the separatists hundreds of additional heavy weapo: s, not just rocket systems but also heavy artillery, tanks and armoured vehicles. Hundreds of Russian regular forces and special forces continue to operate on Ukrainian territory, in clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. These soldiers are backed by Russian command-and-control elements, air defence systems, drones and electronic warfare systems.

There is no doubt that the flow of heavy weapons across those borders, in violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, has given the separatists the fire power and the confidence to escalate the conflict. Since the Minsk agreement in September, which included an immediate ceasefire, the separatists have taken control of an additional 550 square kilometres of territory. Despite the commitments made at Minsk to securing continuous monitoring of the border with verification from the OSCE, hundreds of kilometres of border remain free for the flow of these deadly weapons, often under the guise of humanitarian convoys. Russia's persistent blocking of the proposed expansion of the OSCE border monitoring reveals its true intentions.

Russia arms the separatists, it finances them, it advises them, and it fights covertly alongside them. What it has not managed to do is to get its separatist proxies to stick to Russia's deceitful narrative. The self-proclaimed leader of the Donetsk People's Republic, Alexander Zakharchenko, proudly announced on 24 January that "Today an offensive was launched on Mariupol. This will be the best possible monument to all of our dead". That statement, and others like it, cannot be glibly ignored, as the Russian representative encourages us to do. It is the reality. While Russia professes adherence to the Minsk agreement and the Normandy format meetings, and while it accuses the Ukrainian Government of provocations, the separatist forces that it supports are bent on undermining those agreements, attacking civilians and creating new realities on the ground. That approach, as we have seen in Mariupol this weekend, will only lead us closer to the precipice. It will lead to more deaths, more destruction and more people displaced from their homes.

On each occasion that the Council has met to discuss Ukraine, the vast majority of its members have underlined their commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. We assert quite rightly that these are fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They provide the foundation for an international system that is based on rules and respect and the preservation of international peace and security. We all defend these principles because we do not want a world where borders are redrawn by force, where States are threatened and destabilized by their neighbours, and where innocent civilian populations live in fear of battle orders issued in far-off capitals.

The Security Council has to make very clear where it stands against the profoundly dangerous path that Russia is pursuing in east Ukraine. That is why I urge all Council members to be clear in their messaging today. Russia must withdraw its equipment and troops. It must cease its support for the separatists, and it must effectively control its borders. It must use its influence over the separatists to stabilize the situation and prevent further dangerous escalation. It must play its full part in ensuring the immediate implementation of the Minsk protocol. Once again today, the representative of the Russian Federation has claimed that his country wants a peaceful resolution to the conflict, but such words

are worthless in themselves. We need to see Russian actions to put a stop to this widening and increasingly deadly conflict.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's urgent meeting. We are grateful for Under-Secretary-General Feltman's thorough briefing on such short notice.

Just five days ago (see S/PV.7365), we met in the Council and denounced the devastating consequences of attacks by Russian-backed separatists on civilians in eastern Ukraine, and we appealed to Russia to stop supporting, training and fighting alongside separatist forces. Members of the Council pressed Russia and the separatists not only to recommit themselves to the agreements they had made at Minsk, but actually to honour those commitments in their actions. Unfortunately, we are back in the Chamber today because Russia and the separatists have once again flouted those commitments. The targets are fresh ones, but Russia's end goal remains the same — to seize more territory and move the line of Russian-controlled territory deeper and deeper into Ukraine.

This time, however, statements by the separatists are complicating Russia's strategy. On Friday 23 January, the de facto leader of the Russian-backed separatists in Donetsk, Alexander Zakharchenko, said "today the offensive on Mariupol begins". He also said "there will be no more ceasefires". He said the separatists would not stop their attacks until they had "reached the borders of the former Donetsk region", bragging that separatist forces were now "able to attack in three directions simultaneously".

The representative of the Russian Federation today said that these are statements we have taken out of context. What context possibly justifies a massive offensive against a civilian-populated town? I would note also that attacking in three directions, as the separatist leader said his forces had the capability to do, takes a lot of weapons and forces. This capability reflects the difference made by the substantial months-long influx of Russian personnel and heavy weapons. We know that Zakharchenko said these things because he was filmed when he said them and quoted by the official Russian news agency, Tass. On Saturday, Zakharchenko told people at a rally in Donetsk "today the attack on Mariupol began". He added that "in a few days we will encircle Debaltsevo", a city that is 12 kilometres outside the ceasefire line established at Minsk.

If only the separatists' words had been empty bravado. Unfortunately, on Saturday the world witnessed the horrors that resulted from the separatist attack on Mariupol, a city 25 kilometres outside of the Minsk line. On Saturday alone, more than 100 people were injured in rocket attacks on the city. Approximately 30 people were killed, including women, elderly and children, one of whom was a four-year old boy. Some 40 rounds of rockets struck the city, hitting a market, homes and a school, among other civilian structures. The impartial Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine examined blast craters and concluded that they had been caused by Grad rockets fired from multi-rocket launcher systems in separatist-controlled areas.

Why do these locations matter to the Russians and the separatists? Mariupol is a port city that would provide Russia with another means of supplying separatists. And controlling the city would be another step toward creating a land-bridge to illegally occupied Crimea. Debaltsevo is a strategic rail and road hub and serves as a key link between the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. It is no accident that these strategic cities are in Russia's sights. When on Saturday members of the Council tried to issue a joint statement denouncing the civilian casualties and expressing concern about the separatist statements, Russia blocked it, as we have heard — no wonder, given that less than a day earlier Russia had been perfectly content to disseminate Zakharchenko's statements in its State-run media. It would be strange to be concerned about statements one had encouraged and publicized, but when your State news agency circulates announcements relishing a new offensive and your diplomats refuse to express concern about them, you own not only the statements but also the offensives.

Now sometimes, perhaps given the fog of this bloody war, the separatists are too explicit about their objectives. Indeed, after initially blasting around the separatists' Mariupol ambitions in the news service, Russia began to see the same ghastly images and reports of the carnage that the rest of us saw. At that point, perhaps knowing the source of the weaponry used, Russia tried to deny any tie between the separatists and the attacks. The Russian news service Tass even tried to erase from official news stories all quotes from Zakharchenko speaking about the separatists' attacks.

It is not hard to understand why Russia does not want the world to hear separatist statements. Last Wednesday,

the representative of the Russian Federation told the Council that "the Russian Federation is ensuring full compliance with the Minsk accords" (*S/PV.7365, p. 7*). On Saturday, however, Zakharchenko openly admitted that his forces were violating those same accords. He appeared not to have gotten the Russian memo, which clearly calls for violating the accords while pretending you are not. Despite Zakharchenko's statements, Russia continues to try to play the international community for the fool and blame the violence on the Ukrainians. As recently as yesterday, Foreign Minister Lavrov said "the worsening situation in Ukraine was the result of constant attacks conducted by the Ukrainian Government troops, which breached the Minsk agreements". We heard the same here today from the representative of the Russian Federation.

Zakharchenko's statements are a problem for Russia because they are too straightforward. As members of the Council know — and as, increasingly, all the world can see — the separatists he claims to lead are trained and equipped by Russia and fight with Russian forces by their side. So when Zakharchenko brags about seizing territory beyond the Minsk ceasefire line; when he announces at rallies that separatists will strike Ukrainian forces without provocation; and when he says that he is not interested in negotiating, he is not only speaking about the separatists' intentions but also about Russia's intentions. This offensive is made in Moscow. It is waged by Russian-trained and Russian-funded separatists who use Russian missiles and Russian tanks, who are backed up by Russian troops, and whose operations receive direct Russian assistance.

Since December, Russia has transferred hundreds of pieces of military equipment to pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, including tanks, armored vehicles, rocket systems, heavy artillery and other military equipment. And in recent weeks, Russia has resupplied the separatists with hundreds of pieces of advanced weaponry, including additional rocket systems, heavy artillery, tanks and armoured vehicles. In mid to late January, notwithstanding the shootdown of flight MH-17, Russia even deployed into eastern Ukraine advanced surface-to-air missile and anti-aircraft systems, marking the highest level of Russian air-defence presence in Eastern Ukraine since September 2014. There is a direct correlation between the movement of heavy weapons and the surge in that movement across the border, and attempts by separatists to take more ground.

The horror wrought by this arsenal has been deadly. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the period from 13 to 21 January was the deadliest on record since the 5 September agreement was signed in Minsk. During this time, an average of 29 people were killed each day. More than 5,000 people have been killed and almost 11,000 maimed since the conflict began in April 2014. And today, this very day, the attacks continue on the civilian-populated areas over the Minsk ceasefire lines, not only in Mariupol and Debaltsevo, but also in Pisky and Stanichno-Luhansk. To the Russians, Mariupol and Debaltsevo may just be strategic chess pieces in their effort to move the line of territory that they control, but these cities are also home to hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian civilians. Nearly 500,000 people live in Mariupol, the second biggest city in the Donetsk region, and more than 25,000 live in Debaltsevo. Mariupol is home to 92 preschools attended by 13,000 children.

We continue to believe that the only solution to this situation is a political solution, not a military solution. To that end, we continue to support the efforts of the trilateral contact group, as well as the Normandy group of foreign ministers. We welcome the Normandy group's agreement in Berlin, which recognizes the need for the full, immediate implementation of the Minsk agreement.

If Russia is serious about peace, why does it not condemn the statements by separatists that they will attack Ukrainians first and accept no more ceasefires, instead of trying to erase those statements from its State-run news services? If Russia is serious about peace, why does it not pull its tanks and Grad missiles out of eastern Ukraine instead of sending in more? If Russia is serious about peace, why does it not withdraw its forces at least to the lines agreed upon at Minsk, rather than send in a huge infusion of Russian heavy weapons so as to carve out new lines? Only if Russia takes these steps will there be a chance for the political solution that is so desperately needed.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing. We would have all wished to see 2015 begin under better auspices for Ukraine and its stability. The year has barely started, and twice in less than a week the situation on the ground has forced us to meet here.

The spiral of chaos, which started two weeks ago after several months of relative calm, could not be halted

these past few days — quite the contrary. The deaths of 13 civilians in Volnovakha on 13 January, as well as the shelling of a trolleybus in Donetsk last week, which claimed at least eight civilian victims, were already a source of concern, even as the previous day the Russian, Ukrainian, French and German Foreign Ministers had been able to reach an agreement on the withdrawal of heavy weaponry.

On Saturday and Sunday in Mariupol, separatist groups attacked residential neighbourhoods with rockets, killing nearly 30 civilians and instilling terror among the population. All reports from the ground, in particular those of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe observers, confirm this. More than a further violation of the ceasefire, this is also a serious violation of the international humanitarian law that protects civilians. These acts are unacceptable as they indiscriminately target civilians. The offensive against Mariupol, which was provocatively welcomed by Alexander Zakharchenko last Saturday, violated the commitments undertaken by the parties last September in Minsk and is entirely unacceptable.

Let us not mince words. By supporting the Ukrainian separatists and their actions, Russia bears a significant share of responsibility for the violence. We must now turn to dialogue and seriously discuss the future of Ukraine and how to restore peace. We also call on Russia to stop supporting the separatists, who are hell-bent on destabilizing the situation. We call for a long-overdue end to the transfer of weapons and manpower across the Russian-Ukrainian border, which is fuelling the war and violates the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the most fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and which undermines diplomatic efforts seeking to settle the conflict in accordance with international law and the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Ukrainians, including its minorities. We urge Russia to use all its influence on the separatists in the east of the country so that they fully respect the ceasefire.

The statements made by Mr. Lavrov today, announcing the facilitation of contacts between the warring parties, are a positive sign but they are not enough. We also call on Ukraine to begin the institutional reform as per its commitments. President Poroshenko has spoken publicly of the prospects for national dialogue and institutional reform. That statement was a further step towards the comprehensive implementation of the Minsk accords, which are the only way to achieve a negotiated solution to this crisis. The international community will judge the good faith of the parties not on mere statements but on concrete and verifiable actions that prove their genuine commitment to de-escalation.

We must also call on all parties to refrain from attacking the civilian population, to respect international humanitarian law and to ensure humanitarian access to the wounded and to civilians in need of assistance. We must underscore that there can be no military solution to this conflict. Only by all parties fully implementing the Minsk accords and resuming serious diplomatic discussions, in the context of the trilateral contact group, can there be a positive outcome to this crisis. Every efforts must be made to that end.

In this difficult context, we cannot afford to let down our guard. France remains and will remain fully mobilized to achieving a peaceful settlement. Our goals are clear and consistent: respect for the ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weaponry on each side of the contact line, a resumption of prisoner exchanges, the resolution of humanitarian issues and the implementation by the parties of all measures under the Minsk accords.

France will pursue its efforts, in close contact with our German partners and the Russian and Ukrainian authorities, under the so-called Normandy format. We have no time to waste. This is not the time for prevarication or hypocrisy. Today we must urgently end this conflict, which has already claimed more than 5,000 lives and exacted too high a price from Ukraine, from Russia, from the European Union and from the international system as a whole.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

Ukraine has a democratic Constitution and is implementing a process of reform. Ukraine made a decisive contribution to nuclear non-proliferation when it decided in 1994 to renounce nuclear weapons. Ukraine is a crucial player in the international order. We unreservedly support its territorial integrity. Given these facts, there should be no violence in Ukraine. However, today we are meeting once again due to an extremely serious deterioration in the situation.

Spain would have liked the Council to adopt a statement. Unfortunately, this was not the case. I

therefore vigorously and unreservedly condemn the bombing of urban areas in the city of Mariupol, which claimed tens of civilian victims and injured more than 100. I express the condolences of my country and my delegation to the families of the victims and to the people and Government of Ukraine. They can count on Spain's solidarity.

According to the information provided yesterday by the Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as related by Mr. Feltman, the rockets were launched from locations under the control of rebel groups of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic. The command responsibility for these attacks must be investigated and the perpetrators held responsible and brought to justice. Like other delegations, we deplore the statement made by Alexander Zakharchenko shortly before the attack on Mariupol. The statements constitute a clear violation of the ceasefire and of the Minsk accords. The attacks against civilians are a flagrant violation of international law. International law puts obligations not only on the parties but also on those within whose capacity it is to act to prevent any further violation of international law.

Furthermore, the High Commissioner for Human Rights warned on Friday of the continued presence of foreign fighters in eastern Ukraine. According to reports, in keeping with that of the High Commissioner, they are troops of the Russian Federation. The same source confirmed the presence of sophisticated heavy weaponry in populated areas, under the control of armed rebel groups, and reported repeated violations of the human rights of the civilians trapped there and a lack of the rule of law in those areas.

The Security Council cannot remain silent. It must make itself heard clearly given this situation. We call once again for the full implementation of the Minsk memorandum and protocol, and for the immediate restoration of the ceasefire. We appeal to all those in a position to influence those responsible for their horrendous acts, in particular to Russia, to, in accordance with its status as a signatory to the Minsk accords and to the joint Berlin declaration of 21 January, as well as a member of the OSCE trilateral contact group, and in exercise of its responsibility of the Security Council, contribute to de-escalate the tensions and compel the rebel groups to renounce violence and accept the peaceful and lawful path to pursue their claims.

The violence and horrific acts of this weekend sought to derail dialogue and undermine the negotiated settlement of the crisis provided for in the Minsk accords. We must not allow this to happen.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to sincerely thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his informative briefing.

Jordan regrets certain parties' disregard of the several calls made for a ceasefire either by the Security Council or the international community as a whole. We also regret the continued escalation of the crisis and the violation of the Minsk peace agreement. Jordan expresses its deep concern at this serious escalation of violence and fighting, which could have grave consequences and lead to the further deterioration of the situation in eastern Ukraine and the region.

Jordan strongly condemns the targeting and intimidation of civilians as well as the shelling of residential areas, regardless of the source, and calls for the conduct of a thorough and transparent investigation into the incident involving the shelling of a bus stop in Donetsk and the appalling incident that took place in Mariupol two years ago, which is considered to be the bloodiest incident since last July's peace agreement. We also call for the bringing to justice of all of the perpetrators of these criminals acts.

This serious setback in the situation in eastern Ukraine and the spread of the fighting to other cities makes it incumbent on all parties to hold an emergency meeting to continue the negotiations based on previous agreements and with a view to speedily reaching a comprehensive ceasefire. A political and peaceful solution will not be possible in the context of resort to military means or unilateral measures that undermine regional and international efforts and bring the negotiations back to square one. Rather, the solution lies in the effective measures that lead to peace and calm.

Jordan calls on all States with influence on the separatists to urge them to refrain from the use of force and to cease all violations, which can lead only to further instability in Ukraine.

We call once again on all parties involved in this conflict to shoulder their responsibilities, to immediately implement a ceasefire and to stop all escalatory measures, including provocative and irresponsible speech by any party. We in the Council

and at the international level as a whole should redouble our efforts and do our utmost to prevent the collapse of all the progress that has been achieved over the past year, so as to achieve a comprehensive agreement that takes into account all of the interests of the different parties.

We would conclude by stressing the importance of preserving the country's unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty, of non-interference in its internal affairs, of the proper control of its borders and of the cessation of flows of separatists and foreign fighters and weapons into Ukrainian territory. We also stress the importance of the full implementation, in letter and in spirit, of the Minsk peace agreement and of the memorandum issued later, as well as of the joint statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine on the establishment of a communication line.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

In recent days, we have witnessed a drastic deterioration in the situation in eastern Ukraine, with frequent clashes and attacks that have caused heavy casualties among civilians, including women and children. China condemns all violent attacks aimed at civilians and expresses its condolences to the victims and its sympathy to their families.

We support the conduct of an objective investigation of the relevant attacks to determine the truth and bring the perpetrators to justice. Last week, the Security Council held a public meeting on the question of Ukraine (see S/PV.7365). The relevant Member States called on the parties to the conflict to take effective measures to as to avoid any escalation of the conflict or confrontation. However, much to our distress, the situation in eastern Ukraine has not improved but, on the contrary, escalated, resulting in a considerable loss of civilian life and property. China is deeply concerned at the recent developments in the situation.

The deterioration of the situation in eastern Ukraine is not in the interest of any party. What is most urgent now is for all parties to be calm and exercise restraint so as to avoid any further escalation of the conflict or confrontation, to bring about a ceasefire and stop the violence in eastern Ukraine and to implement comprehensively the Minsk agreement reached in September. All of the parties concerned must make effective efforts to achieve the aforementioned objectives.

Current developments in the situation clearly demonstrate that in dealing with the situation in Ukraine, it is necessary to abide by the overall objective of seeking a political settlement; to fully consider the complex historical factors and the reality of the issue relating to Ukraine; to take into full account the legitimate rights, interests and demands of all regions and ethnic communities in Ukraine; and to attach great importance to addressing the legitimate concerns of all parties and ensure that the interests of all sides are accommodated in a balanced manner, so as to arrive at a fundamental and enduring solution to the question of Ukraine.

The international community must make greater diplomatic efforts to promote the quest for a political settlement of the issue. Discussions held by the Security Council must play a constructive role in helping to ease the situation in Ukraine. China has consistently held that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected. Chinas has adopted an objective and fair position concerning the question of Ukraine. We support the relevant parties of the international community in their efforts to seek a political settlement of the question of Ukraine.

China calls on all parties to make greater efforts and to bring into full play the role of the Normandy and Minsk mediation mechanisms. We hope that through an inclusive political dialogue, and on the basis of accommodating the legitimate interests and concerns of all parties, it will be possible soon to reach a comprehensive balanced and lasting political settlement to achieve peace, security stability and development in Ukraine and the region as a whole. China will continue to play an active and constructive role in the quest for a political settlement of the question of Ukraine.

Mr. Gombo (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I, too, should like to thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing.

Chad is deeply concerned at the deterioration of the security situation in Ukraine, especially in the region of Donetsk and Luhansk. Despite the untiring calls made by the international community for restraint and calm, a violent attack on the port of Mariupol in the Donetsk region took place on Saturday, 24 January, resulting in at least 30 civilians killed and more than 100 injured. On 13 January, we saw the shelling of a bus near Volnovakha that claimed the lives of 12 civilians, the majority of whom were women.

The situation is a serious one. Given the lack of political will when it comes to putting an end to the violence, and the significant increase in the number of civilian victims, Chad is fearful of a resumption of the fighting, whose primary victims will, as always, be civilians.

Developments in terms of the violence in Ukraine very often lead to violations of international humanitarian law, and the international community cannot remain impassively on the sidelines. Those who are responsible must be brought to justice.

With more than 5,000 deaths, 10,300 injured and more than 1 million displaced persons, the Ukrainian tragedy has gone on long enough. In that regard, Chad calls on all the parties to remain calm and show restraint and urges the Government and separatists to engage in a direct and inclusive national dialogue with a view to national reconciliation. Moreover, Chad believes that the solution to the Ukrainian crisis is political, and that it will largely depend upon the willingness of the parties concerned to commit to a true negotiations process to achieve lasting peace. Chad encourages the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to pursue its investigations with a view to assigning responsibility for the Ukrainian crisis, which has lasted far too long and caused many victims.

In line with the Normandy format and Milan meetings and the mediation provided by the trilateral contact group, Chad urges on the countries involved and the Secretary-General, through his good offices, to relaunch the peace process in Ukraine.

To conclude, we urge friendly countries with influence on the parties to bring the necessary pressure to bear with a view to achieving a lasting solution to the crisis on the basis of the Minsk agreements and declaration, with full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I also thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

Since the Council's meeting last week on the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.7365), the conflict in the country has intensified, and civilians continue to suffer the consequences. The rocket attacks on Mariupol, which left 30 people dead and more than 100 injured, including women and children, serve to illustrate this point. Nigeria condemns in the strongest terms indiscriminate attacks on residential areas. They serve no military purpose, they violate international law and they are unacceptable.

We call on both sides to immediately de-escalate the fighting and respect the terms of the ceasefire agreement reached at the Minsk peace talks. We stress that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Ukraine. The parties should seek a political solution through dialogue. It is important that the concerns of the separatists be addressed within the framework of a negotiated political settlement. That should be done without compromising the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela thanks you, Mr. President, for convening this Security Council briefing on Ukraine. We also welcome Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and we appreciate the information he has provided to us on the political situation in Ukraine.

Our country expresses its grave concern about the recent escalation of armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, which has caused loss of civilian lives and untold numbers of injuries. Venezuela reiterates its call on the parties to promote a peaceful, negotiated, political solution to the crisis. We stress that any violent incident on the ground should be investigated independently, and that the investigation's conclusions should be based on irrefutable evidence. Venezuela rejects any act of violence or terrorism, in particular attacks against civilians, from wherever they originate.

The intensification of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine makes it imperative that the parties put an end to their hostilities in the area. The ceasefire is therefore a crucial step.

It is necessary to continue on the path of seeking a political and diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis, in which the conflicting parties commit to working on achieving a firm and lasting peace.

The mediation efforts by regional organizations is, in our view, particularly important in the process of finding a negotiated settlement to the conflict. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Germany and France to promote dialogue among Ukraine, Russia and the representatives of the Donbas region.

We also welcome the joint communiqué issued on 21 January in Berlin by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine, and we encourage the parties to work together for its implementation.

The Minsk agreements are the basis on which lasting peace can be achieved in the region. We reiterate that any intervention by outside elements that violate the Minsk agreements and regional efforts to reach an agreement between the parties should be avoided.

Venezuela stresses that the parties must act with a sense of restraint in order to prevent the dialogue from being undermined by unilateral actions that jeopardize the peace process. The cycle of violence must be broken. Building the foundation for peace involves putting an end to hate speech, ethnic persecution and war propaganda. The historic and root causes of the conflict must be addressed and a political agreement between the parties must be sought.

The escalation in hostilities requires strict compliance by the belligerent parties with obligations concerning the protection of civilians in the areas affected by violence, including the need to ensure humanitarian access to internally displaced persons, refugees and others residents in areas affected by the conflict.

Finally, we again call on all parties to redouble their efforts in the search for a just and lasting political solution, which is in their own interests and those of the entire region.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate, and all the more so because of the failure of the Security Council over the weekend to agree to a simple and clear press statement that would have condemned the events in Mariupol. I also thank the Under-Secretary-General for his briefing, which has been very helpful to the Council.

New Zealand condemns the killing of approximately 30 people and the injuring of more than 90 civilians on 24 January in Mariupol. The reports of indiscriminate shelling of civilian populations and residential areas are deeply concerning, as indeed are the other incidents that were outlined by Under-Secretary-General Feltman. We voiced our concerns last week that the violence was escalating at an alarming rate. The Mariupol incident confirms that the situation in eastern Ukraine is now on a disastrous downward spiral. We do not take this incident in isolation. Its occurrence, magnitude and the claims made about it by the separatist leadership speak for themselves. It was a major assault on a civilian population with the sole purpose of taking and controlling the area as a result.

The most recent civilian casualties from the conflict in eastern Ukraine are completely unacceptable. We call on all sides to respect international humanitarian law and to refrain from any indiscriminate attacks. In that regard, we note that rockets have been launched indiscriminately into civilian areas — a violation of international humanitarian law. There can be no impunity for such reckless acts. Those responsible must be held accountable for their actions.

Russia's provision of troops and materiel to the separatists is irresponsible. The threat of "a major Ukrainian war" is both chilling and wholly inappropriate, and it may now be close to a reality.

Against the mounting body of evidence, Russia is unapologetic for the role it is playing in supporting the separatists. Russia speaks about the facts. What we know for a fact is that Russia is playing a role in this conflict.

We support the promotion of a fully inclusive political dialogue. We call on Russia, instead of blaming others, to use the diplomatic and other tools it has available to ensure that the separatists respect a ceasefire. That ceasefire, as already agreed on in the Minsk accords, must be implemented immediately. The Council must also live up to its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. We must put politics aside, difficult although that may be, and use our collective influence to stop the killing of civilians in eastern Ukraine. That must be the priority. Although this is perhaps not for today's meeting, in future we would like to see the Council seriously consider how it can put pressure on all the belligerents to implement the ceasefire. Words may no longer be enough; more action may still be required.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Feltman for briefing us at such short notice.

Malaysia is alarmed at the escalating violence in eastern Ukraine since the last Security Council meeting on the subject (see S/PV.7365), less than a week ago. Since then we have seen a repeat of indiscriminate attacks on civilians. On 22 January a public transport stop in the city of Donetsk was shelled, with as many

as 15 people killed and more than 20 civilians injured. Two days later, at least 30 people, including two children, were killed in the city of Mariupol, and more than 100 civilians injured. Malaysia condemns such indiscriminate attacks in the strongest terms. It is most unfortunate that the latest violence in Mariupol did not even merit the Security Council's condemnation, owing to a lack of consensus among Council members on the draft press statement. Malaysia calls for an independent investigation into the incidents. The perpetrators of such heinous crimes against civilians must be held accountable. We would like to remind the parties to the conflict that they should adhere to international human-rights and humanitarian law. Attacks on humanitarian convoys must also cease immediately.

The recent events have seriously undermined the ceasefire agreement reached in September of last year between the conflicting parties. Malaysia strongly urges the relevant parties to comply with their commitments as outlined in the Minsk protocol of 5 September and the memorandum of 9 September. The latest developments in eastern Ukraine prove that a diplomatic and political solution is more urgent than ever. In that regard, Malaysia welcomes all efforts that could facilitate a de-escalation of the crisis and contribute to ending the conflict, including the possibility of resuming Geneva-format negotiations. As Malaysia stated last week (see S/PV.7365), a military solution would be in no one's interests in the long run and would not be suitable.

Seventy years after the establishment of the United Nations, we still see blatant disregard today for the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly respect for countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity. Malaysia urges the relevant parties to reflect on the consequences of such actions for their long-term interests and international standing. We reiterate our call to the relevant parties to explore all possible avenues for finding a peaceful solution. We are committed to playing a constructive role in the Council in order to de-escalate the crisis and see talks resume so as to restore Ukraine's stability and territorial integrity.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): I am grateful to you for convening this meeting, Mr. President, and would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing on the outbreak of hostilities in eastern Ukraine.

In our meeting on Wednesday, 21 January (see S/PV. 7365), the Angolan delegation expressed its position on the issue in the wake of the attack on a bus in the Donetsk region that resulted in a number of civilian casualties. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our position, while condemning the recent attack on Mariupol and the loss of life and extensive destruction of property. I will be brief.

We regret the loss of lives in the recent outbreak of hostilities in eastern Ukraine and emphasize the urgent need to protect civilians. We condemn the violations of the ceasefire and urge all the parties to observe it. We believe that the Minsk accords constitute a framework for a peaceful solution to the conflict, and we urge all parties to abide by them. We stress the importance of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Finally, we believe it is crucial that humanitarian assistance be provided to the victims of the conflict and that efforts stepped up to help the thousands in need.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Chile.

We would like to thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing on the recent events in Ukraine.

We join in the condemnation of the indiscriminate shelling of residential areas in the city of Mariupol, an attack that constitutes a significant and worrying escalation of the level of violence in eastern Ukraine. Those responsible for such deplorable acts against the civilian population must be held accountable, and we emphasize the absolute necessity for an objective investigation of the facts that will see that those responsible are brought to justice.

The violence must end so that Ukrainians can rebuild their lives in a stable and secure country, while maintaining its sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We urge the parties to fully implement the Minsk agreements, which, along with the ceasefire memorandum of 19 September, have laid the foundations and established the criteria for a negotiated solution to the crisis.

We furthermore recall that in Minsk all parties agreed to allow the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to monitor and verify the ceasefire. We emphasize our support for the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and urge the parties to cooperate with its mandate, particularly through support for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): Thank you for convening today's urgent meeting, Mr. President. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing, and all those here whose statements supported Ukraine and expressed sympathy with my people.

Unfortunately, since the previous Security Council meeting on Ukraine on 21 January, (see S/PV.7365) the situation there has deteriorated significantly. On 24 January, Russian-backed terrorists committed another heinous crime against humanity. As a result of the shelling of residential areas in Mariupol, in eastern Ukraine, 30 civilians were killed and more than 100 wounded. According to the 24 January spot report of the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the bombardment was carried out using multiple Grad and Uragan rockets launched from inside terrorist-controlled territory. The shelling of Mariupol began just after statements by one of the terrorist leaders about imminent attacks on Ukrainian cities, as well as a significant increase in inflows of Russian armed forces and weapons into the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. As the President of Ukraine stated,

> "The bloody murder of dozens of civilians and injuries to almost 100 people by pro-Russian terrorists in Mariupol not only constitute a terrorist attack, they are a crime against humanity, and thus an issue to be considered by the tribunal in The Hague".

Yesterday was yet another day of mourning in Ukraine. We express our gratitude to the whole civilized world for its strong solidarity with Ukraine in the wake of this horrible tragedy, for the deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and for the wishes for a swift recovery of those injured. Ukraine appreciates the Secretary-General's clear and unambiguous statement denouncing the unilateral withdrawal from the ceasefire by the so-called rebel leadership.

In that respect, it is highly regretful that one of the permanent members of the Security Council, bestowed by the Charter of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has once again showed its utter disrespect, not only of the Charter but of human values, by blocking the Council's condemnation of the heinous crimes against humanity committed by terrorists in Mariupol.

Today's statement delivered by the Russian delegation made it sound as if it were not Russia that invaded, occupied and annexed a part of the Ukrainian sovereign territory of Crimea last spring. The Russian delegation's statement today made it sound as if regular Russian troops were not in Ukrainian sovereign territory. At the last meeting of the Security Council (see S/PV.7365), I demanded an explanation as to what 16 Russian battalions and a huge number of tanks and artillery were doing in my country without an invitation. The civilized world is waiting for an explanation from the Russian side. On can find additional evidence on my Mission's website, which we will try to send to Council members as well.

If militants and Russia had complied with the Minsk agreements, this tragedy — the most dreadful since the beginning of the Russian aggression — would not have happened. Radio and telephone conversations intercepted by the Security Service of Ukraine irrefutably indicate that the attack was organized by terrorists supported by Russia. Further evidence of that is Russia's blocking of a draft statement by the Security Council condemning this horrible event, as well as its complete silence — not a single word of reproach — about the terrorists' other barbaric acts in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, such as the attack on Volnovakha, the shameful behaviour with regard to Ukrainian hostages, the tragedy at the trolleybus stop in Donetsk and many other cases. Therefore, the Russian Federation, which continues to support terrorist activities and whose troops are directly involved in hostilities against Ukraine, is solely responsible for the murders in recent weeks of innocent civilians in Volnovakha, Debaltsevo, Donetsk, Mariupol and many other towns and villages in Ukraine.

We seek international support so that Russia is finally compelled to keep its promises, rein in its proxies and stop sending troops and weaponry into Ukraine. We demand that Russia fully implement the Minsk agreements, which it has thus far supported in words only, including the immediate withdrawal of all its armed forces from the territory of Ukraine, the stabilization of the Ukrainian-Russian border and the establishment of international monitoring. It should also free without any further delay Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko — who is still on a hunger strike

that is endangering her life — as well as Oleg Sentsov, Alexander Kolchenko and the other Ukrainian citizens who are being held in Russia illegally.

We call on the international community to respond resolutely to the crimes of terrorists and to increase all forms of pressure on those who sponsor and support them. Our position remains constant: the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic must be recognized as terrorist organizations.

Time and again, we have called on the Security Council to finally exercise its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations so as to prevent these terrorist groups from committing their crimes. The only way to do that is to put an end to the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Today, as never before, we need joint decisive actions by the international community against terrorist organizations and those who control them.

Let me summarize my statement with the words of our President:

> "We stand for peace, but we accept the enemy's challenge. We will defend our homeland as true patriots. We will do everything to stop the pain and suffering, to return peace to each Ukrainian family — from Lviv to Luhansk, from Chernihiv to Kerch. Having united our efforts, we will defend our freedom."

In this struggle for Ukraine, for Europe and, ultimately, for the Charter of the United Nations, we count on the Council's solidarity and actions.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to make a number of substantive comments. However, by way of introduction, I would like to again revisit the topic of what took place in Mariupol and the fact that the Security Council was not in a position to condemn or speak to that tragedy.

A number of my colleagues have referred to this, including my Ukrainian colleague. Even when compared to his usual standards, he has really misstated the position of the Russian Federation. First, we always condemn all attacks on all civilians, and we mourn the deaths of all civilians. This is quite different from the authorities in Kyiv, who say they mourn the deaths of civilians but clearly indicate which civilians and from which regions. The fact that hundreds of individuals are dying from Ukrainian rockets and snipers does not interest them. They continue to view Donbas as Ukrainian territory. If one does not consider it to be Ukrainian territory anymore, one should just say so clearly. That would simplify things.

Secondly, we always condemn the deaths of innocent people, and we stood ready to do so in the case of Mariupol as well. The fact that we were not able to do so was the result of the sloppy diplomacy conducted by a number of our colleagues using methods they have resorted to in the past with respect to the Ukrainian crisis, when they have come up with wording that is quite clearly unacceptable to one member of the Security Council. Have they ever condemned the inhumane statements that we hear from the authorities in Kyiv? Not once. Why is it that they all fixate on the statements of one leader of the self-defence formations and insist that we have to condemn them? It is quite clear that we are not acting fairly here, because a statement condemning what happened in Mariupol would have been adopted in just a few minutes, just as we adopted a statement condemning what took place in Volnovakha, which we immediately agreed to.

Thirdly, we have always been in favour of objective investigations in such cases. Of course, one does not want to bring to the Security Council the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission. In this case, however, it seems to us that the members of the Monitoring Mission did not act appropriately. The members of the Mission, which included individuals from the United States, took a look the site of the tragedy in a very cursory way and then immediately came up with a statement. That runs counter to the traditional and agreed methods of work of the OSCE. Again, in this situation we see a case in which tragic events have clearly been exploited for political ends.

Allow me to now move on to the more substantive part of our discussion. Regrettably, our meeting here today reminds us of a great many previous meetings, although the focus is perhaps a little different than before. Many colleagues today have focused on the statements made by the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic. I remind Council members that Donbas has been shelled for months by Ukrainian rockets and artillery. Therefore, it is quite clear that we cannot expect conciliatory statements from the leaders of the Donetsk People's Republic. They have been trying for month to push the rockets and artillery of the

Ukrainian forces back far enough so that they could not threaten Donetsk and Luhansk. That, too, is a goal of the Minsk agreements and underscores the importance of implementing them.

We have received much information here today, but we need to look at the roots of the problem. We need to understand what is meant by the thesis that the conflict in eastern Ukraine cannot be resolved by military means. We referred to this in the Security Council during the early phase of the conflict. Ukrainian tanks cannot simply move into Donbas. Unfortunately, that was part of the Poroshenko peace plan, which, in essence, demanded the capitulation of the self-defence formations. That was the first step towards escalating the conflict into a catastrophe. That is unacceptable, but unfortunately we have recently seen it being pushed by certain members of the Security Council. Some Council members today have said that the insurgents and Russia need to do this, that and the other, and then we could begin the political settlement. That is the entirely wrong approach. Serious political efforts need to be undertaken right now. Direct dialogue between Kyiv and the east need to be set up. It is necessary to put an end to the game of hide-and-seek with the Constitution, which needs to be discussed at a all-Ukraine level.

Today, Mr. Feltman said that Mr. Poroshenko had agreed to a return to the Geneva format. Frankly, I am not familiar with the fact that Russia had agreed to a change in the format, but as far as I know Moscow is very flexible when it comes to the format. We stand ready to work in any format that would have a chance of yielding genuine progress in favour of a settlement. I wish to underscore, however, no discussion regarding one format or another should serve as a pretext to move away from direct dialogue between Kyiv and the representatives of the regions, first and foremost the east.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of Ukraine has requested the floor for a further statement. I give him the floor.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): My country has been mentioned once again. Ukraine has always presented facts and figures, confirmed not only by other national competent authorities, but also by many independent observers and missions of international organizations on the ground. Today, we also have a list of questions on the 16 battalions and other groups. I urge the Council to compare the figures. At the last Council meeting (see S/PV.7365), 9,000 Russian troops were mentioned. Today, we have calculated that there are around 12,000 troops, 235 tanks, 720 armoured combat vehicles and 263 artillery systems. It would be much easier for us if we received any explanation from the Russian side about what they are doing in the sovereign territory of Ukraine. It would be much easier for all of us to solve the problem if they immediately withdrew those forces and their presence in Ukraine, pursuant to the Minsk agreement.

What we have heard instead from the Russian representative in the Council today is nothing but the old, arid and constantly repeated magic mantra — fictions about coup d'etats, Bandera and Shukhevych fascists, anti-Semites, oppression of the Russian language, ignoring the rights of the Donbas population, and so on. But not even once have Ukraine and the world received even a brief and meaningful message of condolence from Russia for the victims killed by its own mercenaries in Mariupol or Volnovakha. Instead, we see how Russia helps the Russian-speaking population of Donbas: by exterminating it with Grad shelling.

I call again on the Russian Federation not to play with words or to turn Council deliberations into theatre. We have a lot of proof of its direct and indirect aggression in Ukraine. We are still restrained in calling for the Council's full recognition that Russia is the aggressor, but that cannot last long. Russia is a sponsor of terrorism in Ukraine. We advise Russia to stop and to do what was agreed in Minsk.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The representative of the Russian Federation has requested the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I am a little surprised at our Ukrainian colleague has begun to argue using concepts that I did not voice during my comments in the Council today. But it is good that he he has remembered them and that he deems it necessary to continue to argue about things that are simply not subject to argument, concerning Stepan Bandera and other related matters.

I am, however, puzzled by something else. I am gratified by the fact that our Ukrainian colleague has assimilated the English language and that he speaks it so well, but I am just stunned by the fact that he has forgotten his Russian, because only a few moments ago I explained the thrust of the problem facing the east. Instead of simply accepting that and building a political

position based on it, we hear the same old propaganda. That is quite regrettable.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.15 p.m.